

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-13 ADP-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 ACDA-19

SY-10 USSS-00 CAB-09 COME-00 EB-11 FAA-00 EUR-25

DOT-00 RSR-01 /164 W

----- 073883

O R 131150Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9388

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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BEIRUT POUCH BAGHDAD

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTIONS TO INTERCEPTION OF LEBANESE AIRLINER

SUMMARY. GOI CABINET AUGUST 12 DISCUSSED INTERCEPTION  
LEBANESE PLANE. ALL MINISTERS PRESENT REPORTEDLY DEFENDED  
ACTION AS NECESSARY BUT SEVERAL IMPLIED RESERVATIONS. DECISION  
ATTRIBUTED TO HIGHEST GOVERNMENT LEADERS WITH PARTICIPATION PRI  
MIN. DEF MIN DAYAN HAS PUBLICLY JUSTIFIED ATTACK, CLAIMING  
INTERCEPTION NOT FAILURE IN PURELY MILITARY SENSE, ALTHOUGH  
POLITICAL OBJECTIVE OF CAPTURING PFLP LEADERS NOT ATTAINED. ISRAEL  
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PILOTS ASSOCIATION HAS ISSUED STRONG CRITICAL STATEMENT.

HISTADRUT SECRETARY-GENERAL BEN-AHARON CHARACTERIZED IPA STATEMENT AS "BALANCED, SENSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE," AND FORMER CHIEF ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE HAIM HERZOG HAS QUESTIONED ADVISABILITY ACTION IN BBC INTERVIEW. JERUSALEM POST EMPHASIZES MILD-NESS OFFICIAL US REACTION. WHILE MOST PRESS COMMENT SUPPORTS GOI ACTION, SEVERAL EDITORIALS NOTE THAT GOI HAS DAMAGED ITS INTERNATIONAL IMAGE, JEOPARDIZED PROSPECTS TANGIBLE RESULTS FROM UPCOMING ICAO CONFERENCE IN ROME, AND SET DANGEROUS PRECEDENT. HAARETZ COMMENTATOR RUBINSTEIN WRITES THAT ISRAELIS HAVE HANDED TERRORISTS NEW PROPAGANDA TOOL IN FRUITLESS VIOLATION INTERNATIONAL LAW. AS USUAL IN TIMES OF INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM, MOST ISRAELI OPINION DEFEND GOVERNMENT ACTION, BUT UNDERLYING DOUBT AS TO CONSEQUENCES INTERFERENCE IN SENSITIVE AREA OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ALSO NOTICEABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER WEEKLY GOI CABINET MEETING AUGUST 12, AT WHICH DEFMIN AND CHIEF OF STAFF GAVE BRIEFING ON INTERCEPTION LEBANESE AIRPLANE, MINISTERS HAVE DEFENDED ACTION IN NEWS INTERVIEWS, AND SOME HAVE IMPLIED RESERVATIONS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS. SOME NEWS SOURCES HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT DECISION TO CARRY OUT INTERCEPTION HAD BEEN ADOPTED BY HIGHEST LEVEL LEADERSHIP INCLUDING PRIMIN. AFTER MEETING, TRANSPORT MINISTER SHIMON PERES, ASKED WHETHER ACTION WOULD HARM GOI'S POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON ISSUE OF TERRORISM, REPLIED DEFENSIVELY. HEALTH MINISTER SHEMTOV ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DOUBTS AND RESERVATIONS MIGHT COME TO HIS MIND, BUT SAID INTERCEPTION WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY ACTION JUSTIFIED BY FAILURE OTHER COUNTRIES TO STOP ARAB TERROR.

2. DEFMIN DAYAN HAS GIVEN INTERVIEWS WITH BOTH ISRAELI AND FOREIGN JOURNALISTS JUSTIFYING INTERCEPTION. EMPHASIZING BACKGROUND ARAB TERRORIST ACTIONS DAYAN SAID ISRAEL HAD CHOICE BETWEEN DEFENSIVE WARFARE OR FIGHTING BACK. DAYAN INSISTED THAT FROM PURELY MILITARY VIEWPOINT MISSION WAS NOT FAILURE, ALTHOUGH POLITICAL OBJECTIVE OF CAPTURING HABASH NOT ATTAINED. ISRAEL HAD NOT SEIZED WRONG PLANE, NOR WAS ANYONE HURT. DAYAN JUSTIFIED ACTION BY NOTING ARABS NOT GOI CONDUCTING TERROR IN ATHENS AND ENTIRE WORLD SHOULD ASSIST WAR ON TERROR, AND UNDERScoreD THAT 70 OF 110 TERRORISTS CAPTURED IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN RELEASED AFTER SHORT TIME.

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3. ISRAEL PILOTS ASSOCIATION (IPA) ISSUED STRONG CRITICAL STATEMENT AGAINST INTERCEPTION STATING IT COULD NOT CONDONE INTERFERENCE OF ISRAELI MILITARY AIRCRAFT WITH CIVILIAN PLANE. "ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE ISRAELI ACTION...WE CANNOT ACCEPT IT AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISTS SHOULD BE WAGED ON THE INTERNATIONAL AIR LANES." CHAIRMAN OF IPA SAID IF INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIRLINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION (IFALPA)

CALLED INTERNATIONAL PROTEST STRIKE BECAUSE OF GOI ACTION, HIS ORGANIZATION WOULD PARTICIPATE, BUT IT WOULD NOT COOPERATE IN ANY IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS, SINCE NONE HAVE BEEN IMPOSED ON STATES HARBORING OR AIDING SKYJACKERS.

4. HISTADRUT SECRETARY-GENERAL BEN -AHARON HAS CHARACTERIZED IPA POSITION AS "BALANCED, SENSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE." FORMER CHIEF GOI INTELLIGENCE HAIM HERZOG IN BBC INTERVIEW STATED THAT PERSONALLY HE HAD DOUBTS ABOUT ADVISABILITY. ACTING JEWISH AGENCY CHAIRMAN ARYE DULZIN, RETURNING FROM VISIT TO UK, STATED THAT BRITISH JEWRY DID NOT REGARD GOI EXPLANATIONS AS CONVINCING.

5. JERUSALEM POST AUGUST 12 STRESSED MILDNESS OFFICIAL USG REACTION TO INTERCEPTION, QUOTING TEXT DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT. IN DESCRIBING ATHERTON-RAVIV TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, JERUSALEM POST STATED "MR ATHERTON IS BELIEVED TO HAVE MERELY READ THE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT TO MR RAVIV BEFORE ITS RELEASE TO NEWSMEN." POST FURTHER STATED THAT AMBASSADOR SCALI WAS EXPECTED TO REFLECT RELATIVELY MILD TONE OF DEPARTMENT STATEMENT.

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6. WHILE MOST PRESS REACTION DEFENDS INTERCEPTION, SEVERAL EDITORIALS AND HAARETZ COMMENTATOR AMNON RUBINSTEIN HAVE TAKEN CRITICAL STANCE. AUGUST 12 EDITORIAL IN MAARIV (WHICH USUALLY TAKES HAWKISH STANCE) STATED THAT THOSE WHO PLANNED ACTION FAILED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT ICAO SESSION TO DISCUSS AIR TERRORISM IS TO MEET IN ROME AT END OF MONTH. ISRAEL NOW WOULD GO TO MEETING AS ACCUSED AS WELL AS ACCUSER. HAARETZ EDITORIAL AUGUST 12 ENTITLED "WAR WITHOUT POLITICAL CONSIDERATION" COMMENTED THAT GOI HAD DAMAGED ITS IMAGE AS SUPPORTER OF PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION. AL HAMISHMAR AUGUST 12 RAISED QUESTION WHETHER DECISION REGARDING INTERCEPTION TOOK INTO ACCOUNT  
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POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS AND COMPLICATIONS WHICH MIGHT ARISE FROM SUCH AN EXCEPTIONAL ACTION.

7. RUBINSTEIN COMMENTING IN HAARETZ AUGUST 13 STATES THAT GOI ACTION WAS VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, CONTRADICTS EARLIER GOI DECLARATIONS, AND CONSTITUTES "GRAVE STRATEGIC ERROR." DECISION, UNDERTAKEN IMPULSIVELY, HAD INTRODUCED NEW PRECEDENT WHICH WOULD HURT GOI MORE THAN ARAB STATES. ISRAEL DEPENDED ON SAFETY INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION FOR LINK WITH OUTSIDE MORE THAN ARABS. ACTION ALSO JEOPARDIZED COOPERATION OF GOI SECURITY SERVICES WITH BRITISH AND OTHERS, WEAKENED GOI POSITION IN FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, AND HANDED TERRORISTS NEW PROPAGANDA WEAPON TO ARGUE THAT HIJACKING IS TWO-SIDED BUSINESS.  
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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PFOR, IS, LE, PFLP, IPA, ISRAELI PILOT ASSOCIATION  
**To:** STATE  
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